

Slaughter Calls for Vote on Rx Importation Bill

Congresswoman and 220 Other Members of Congress Sign Letter to Speaker

Washington, DC - Rep. Louise M. Slaughter (D-Fairport) has signed on to a letter with 220 other Members of Congress urging Speaker J. Dennis Hastert (R-IL) to schedule a vote on a comprehensive prescription drug importation bill during the first session of the 109th Congress.

“Time and again Congress has spoken out in support of drug importation. It is time for Speaker Hastert and the Republican Leadership to get out of the way and allow American consumers to have access to the affordable health care they so rightly deserve,” said Rep. Slaughter.

In July of 2003, The Pharmaceutical Market Access Act (H.R. 2427), which allows for market access to FDA-approved prescription drugs from FDA-approved facilities in twenty-five industrialized countries, passed the House with a bipartisan majority of 243-186. In the months following this vote, dozens of states, counties and municipalities have proposed or implemented their own drug importation programs in the absence of federal action and in order to help constituents access the drugs they need at affordable prices. Importation has been endorsed by consumer groups, pharmacies and advocacy organizations.

"There is real bi-partisan support for this cause...we have watched town after town, state after state take this matter into their own hands. We should have been standing shoulder to shoulder with them; instead we stood in their way. It is time for Congress to act," continued Slaughter.

The letter says the Administration, specifically the Food and Drug Administration, should present a plan to Congress on how to implement a safe and effective drug importation plan. The letter also states that "American consumers deserve a vote on the floor of the U.S. House of Representatives."

Text of the Letter:

May 26, 2005

The Honorable J. Dennis Hastert

Speaker

U.S. House of Representatives

H-232 The Capitol

Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Hastert:

We are writing to urge you to schedule a vote on a comprehensive drug importation bill during the first session of the 109th Congress.

As you know, H.R. 2427, the Pharmaceutical Market Access Act, passed the House with a resounding bipartisan majority of 243 to 186 in July, 2003. In the months following this vote, dozens of states, counties, and municipalities have proposed or implemented their own drug importation programs in the absence of federal action in order to help constituents access the drugs they need at affordable prices. This list includes Montgomery County, Maryland, home to the FDA.

Importation has been endorsed by consumer groups, pharmacies, and advocacy organizations. In addition, the Department of Health and Human Services recently authorized the direct purchase of flue vaccine from Germany.

We believe that the Administration, specifically the FDA, should present a plan to Congress on how to implement a safe and effective drug importation plan. In the absence of their actions, we believe that American consumers deserve a vote on the floor of the U.S. House of Representatives.

Sincerely,

/s

Rep. Louise M. Slaughter + 220 Other Members